

Story 1801 (1989 Tape 7)

Narrator: Memduh Derin

Location: Konya, capital city
of Konya Province

Date: May 1989

The Best Times Pass

In the old days, life was less complicated and far expensive than it is now. If you simply had just bread and butter to eat, you still had a good life. I can remember part of an episode that occurred when I was five years old

One of the villagers brought his ox to the public marketplace in town to sell it. At the marketplace people gathered around this villager and made fun of the poor man. One said, "We shall give you 150 kuruş¹ for your ox. Another said, "No, we shall give you 100 kuruş." My grandfather came along and gave the poor man two and a half liras 250 kuruş for his ox

Everyone was happy with this sale except my grand-

¹There were 100 kuruş to the lira. The kuruş was in the twentieth century a copper coin. As late as 1962 one could buy a large loaf of bread for 60 kuruş. Shortly after that, however, devaluation of Turkish money began, and the kuruş became worthless and disappeared from circulation. By the early 1990s it took 35,000 Turkish liras to equal one American dollar.

Story 1801

mother. When my grandfather reached home with the ox, she said to him, "Why did you buy such an ox? There is no meat on its bones at all!"

But my grandfather said, "Stop, woman! Wait until we have slaughtered the ox, and then make your judgment about it."

They slaughtered the ox, though I cannot remember all of the details, for I was only about five years old at the time. I do remember, however, that they got two full washtubs of meat from that ox, and the meat was all lean. We could not have eaten that much meat ourselves in two years. My grandfather sold the ox hide for five liras, and so we really got all that meat for nothing.

Lady in audience: "Yes, yes! Because your grandfather gave the poor man a fair price for his ox, the meat was blessed and multiplied."

■ "Yes, things were much cheaper in those old days Everything was inexpensive then."²

²The narrator ignored completely the spectator's interpretation and returned to his initial theme.